Chapter **5**

Blogging for Business

The topic of blogging deserves in-depth discussion. Blogging is one of the most powerful and versatile digital marketing tools at your disposal. You can think of your blog as a home for content of every type, including text, graphics, audio, and video. Functionally, though, a blog is just a tool that helps you manage certain pages of your website.

The power of a well-executed business blog lies in its capability to generate awareness for your company, brands, customer-facing employees, products, and services. When done right, the business blog becomes a critical part of your marketing mix. If done improperly, however, a business blog can become a frustrating, time-consuming chore that gives you zero return for your effort.

Although you should always keep the customer journey in mind, the main purpose of your business blog is to create aware and engaged prospects who eventually convert into leads and sales. Although in other content areas, building ungated, gated, and deep discount offers (discussed in Chapter 3) into your content is critical, the goal of your blog is not the immediate conversion of a prospect into a lead or customer.

Marketing is about the sequence of the offers you make to prospects, leads, and customers. Your blog content is one of the entry point offers (EPOs) that you make to cold prospects who know nothing about you or your company. But content is also something you can distribute via email, social media, and paid traffic to even your best customers to keep your business at the forefront of people's minds and provide additional value.

REMEMBER

In this chapter, we give you strategies for successful business blogging. We point you toward effective tools to use for blogging ideas, tell you how to find and work with content creators to keep your blog diverse and interesting, and help you brainstorm effective headlines for your blog articles. The final part of this chapter provides a list of the elements by which you can "audit" your blog to make sure it's as effective as you can make it.

Establishing a Blog Publishing Process

To produce a blog that has an impact on the bottom line, you need a process. The unsuccessful business blog fails to plan. Putting together a blog-publishing process helps you do the following:

» Fine-tune aspects of your blog such as style, tone, topics, offers, mediums.

» Plan your content and identify content gaps while considering what your audience *wants* you to write about.

» Maximize your content's immediate impact as well as its long-term impact as a resource.

Your blog-publishing process should include a way to generate blog post ideas, utilize content segments for consistent planning, find and work with content creators, edit content, and broadcast new content. The following sections break down the details of each part of this process.

Brainstorming blog post ideas

In Chapter 6, we offer you 65 content and blog post types you can use in multiple ways, which will ensure that you never run out of post ideas or ways to frame your content again. In this section, you learn which tools are available to you while you're brainstorming.

Get inspiration from your customer avatar

The customer avatar process outlined in Chapter 1 gives you an abundant source of information for brainstorming blog post ideas for your blog. What blog posts, videos, podcasts, and so on should you create to attract and convert your avatar?

Start by looking at the five components of your avatar:

➤ **Goals and values:** What is the avatar trying to achieve? What values does he hold dear?

➤ **Sources of information:** What books, magazines, blogs, and other publications does the avatar reference for information?

➤ **Demographics:** What is the age, gender, and marital status of the avatar?

➤ **Challenges and pain points:** What holds the avatar back from achieving her goals?

➤ **Objections:** Why might the avatar choose not to buy your product or service?

Answer each of those questions about your avatar and use those answers to brainstorm ideas for content. Use the information you know about your target market to create content that solves your avatar's problem, enters the conversations she's having, speaks to her goals, and meets her objections head-on.
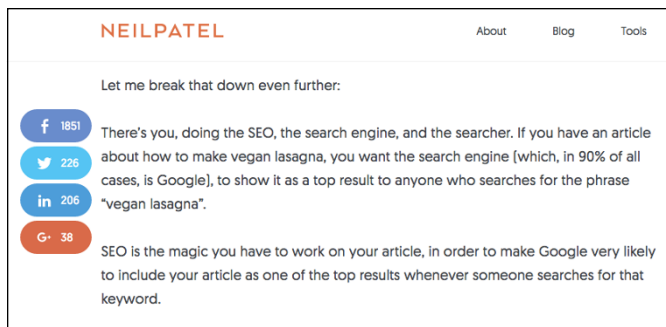
Monitor your own data

The savvy blogger watches how the audience responds to content by monitoring data points. These data points help you determine what you should produce more of in the future.

Google Analytics is a free tool that allows you to view data about how your visitors are using your website. You can use Google Analytics to determine which blog posts on your website receive the most traffic, which posts people spend the most time on, and where the traffic comes from (for example, Twitter, Google, and email).

You should also keep an eye on the number of social shares on each blog post. If you use a content management system like WordPress or Squarespace, you can install social sharing buttons that allow blog visitors to easily share your content with their network on sites like Twitter, Facebook, or Pinterest. Figure 5-1 shows a blog post with high social engagement and shares. The data-driven blogger can find inspiration and create content that mimics posts with high social share count.

And finally, when distributing your content through an email newsletter, keep an eye on the open and click-through rates on each email. Content that interests your audience gets a relatively higher percentage of opens and clicks than content your audience finds less interesting.

FIGURE 5-1:
A blog post
from Neil Patel
which recieved
high social
engagement — as
indicated by the
numbers on
the left.

NEILPATEL

About   Blog   Tools

Let me break that down even further:

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There's you, doing the SEO, the search engine, and the searcher. If you have an article about how to make vegan lasagna, you want the search engine (which, in 90% of all cases, is Google), to show it as a top result to anyone who searches for the phrase "vegan lasagna".

SEO is the magic you have to work on your article, in order to make Google very likely to include your article as one of the top results whenever someone searches for that keyword.

Source: https://neilpatel.com/blog/

Use information pulled from your internal data sources such as Google Analytics, keyword trackers, and social media to see how your content is performing. Metrics like sessions, page views, CTA conversions, rankings, and social shares will help to shape your content calendar, prioritizing what the data tells you concerning your audience's interests.

Establishing content segments

Your blog should not be reinventing itself from week to week and month to month. You and your audience can derive more value from your blog if you create a predictable structure to the types of content you publish. To offer a predictable structure, you create content segments. A *content segment* is a blog post format that repeats on a set schedule and follows a similar style and template.

You're likely already familiar with content segments whether you're aware of it or not. The radio, television, and print mediums have used segments for decades. For example, the Letters to the Editor segment is a staple of the newspaper industry that appears day after day. *The Hustle,* a daily email newsletter that discusses the latest business news and trends, has a segment called "TLDR: 10 Quick Takes to Catch You Up." In this content segment, they give ten of the biggest business newstories for the day in a short, one- to two-sentence summary. Figure 5-2 shows Moz, a company that creates SEO software and resources for digital marketers, featuring a weekly video blog post called "Whiteboard Friday."

Many of the post types that we introduce you to in Chapter 6 are adaptable as segments. For example, you can run the link roundup post (covered in Chapter 6) every week or month on your blog. Simply curate and compile a list of links that your audience would find interesting and publish it along with a description of what people can expect if they visit that link.

FIGURE 5-2:
An excerpt of a segmented post from Moz.

Segments are great pieces to have on your calendar for a variety of reasons. One is that you can offer outside writers consistent exposure on your blog. Another reason is that they're easily repeatable and quickly consumable because the format is always the same. Your audience will recognize them and grow to expect them as you continue to publish them, providing people with consistent value.

Working with content creators

To produce the content necessary to grow your blog, you're likely to need a team of writers. An outside writer is someone not associated with your brand who creates content assets for your blog. Those content assets are typically written articles, but the content can also take the form of audio, video, and images for your blog. Acquiring quality outside content creators gives your blog a broad range of perspectives and can help give authority and reach to your blog. This is especially true if the content creator is an *influencer,* that is, someone who has an above-average impact in his or her niche. Influencers often have a following of their own and are connected to key players in media outlets, consumer groups, or industry associations.

Finding content creators

One place to start when you're hunting for content creators is to search for blogs that are similar to yours in topic. Use a search engine, such as Google, and enter one of the following search queries:

[your blog topic] blogs

[your blog topic] blogger

[your blog topic] author

[your blog topic] speaker

For instance, if your blog is on the vegan lifestyle, you can search for "vegan blogs" and find links to top vegan blogs and authors who have contributed to those blogs.

TIP Don't just search the first page of the search engine results page. Search deep into the results pages, many pages in — this is where you might stumble upon a good writer who may not be receiving very much traffic. These bloggers are very receptive to contributing content to other blogs to receive more exposure for their own blog.

You can also search for content creators on Twitter. Most content creators use Twitter to distribute links to their content. Use an app such as Followerwonk to search Twitter Bios for terms like the following:

[your blog topic] blogger

[your blog topic] writer

[your blog topic] author

[your blog topic] speaker

Another way you can find content creators is to visit blogs that are writing about topics that are the same as, or related to, your own and contact their guest bloggers. Often, these are freelance writers and bloggers who would be willing to write for your blog for money and exposure to your audience.

Next, you may be able to find content creators from your best commenters. These are people who leave the most in-depth and thoughtful comments on your articles. Not only are these commenters engaged with you, they know your style, and they may be writers and speakers looking for exposure.

Finally, you can create a Write for Us page on your site or blog so that interested writers can contact you. But be careful: You can get many low-quality content creators sending requests from your "Write for Us" page, which is why you want to include guidelines. Listing what you expect from content creators helps to detract the ones who aren't fit for your blog as well as draw the kind of authors

you're looking for. Here are the elements to include on your Write for Us page to attract high-quality writers:

» **Acceptance of bylined articles:** Most writers want to know that you will include a byline with a link to their website; let them know you do.

» **Statement that you pay for articles:** If you pay for articles, you increase the response rate by letting writers know on the Write for Us page. You don't have to include how much you pay.

» **Content categories:** Outline the topics you want guest writers to write about.

» **Examples:** Link to sample articles that model the posts you want from guest writers.

» **A form:** Include a form that the interested writer can fill out to contact you. Ask for the writer's name and email, at a minimum. To filter out low-quality submissions, ask interested writers to submit writing samples; at our company, we ask for three writing samples.

MarketingProfs does an excellent job of creating a very detailed Write for Us page to help find quality content creators; see Figure 5-3 for an excerpt.

FIGURE 5-3:
An excerpt from MarketingProfs's "Write for Us" page.

Source: http://www.marketingprofs.com/write-for-us

Acquiring content creators

After you find content contributors who interest you, it's time to reach out to them. Understand that outside content creators will produce content for your blog for one of two reasons: money or exposure (or both).

For writers doing it for the first reason, the process is simple: You cut them a check, and they create a piece of content for you. As a rule, the more specialized the knowledge your writer needs, the more the content will cost you. It's a supply and demand thing. If you're unsure how much the going rate for a writer is, you can visit sites such as Upwork (`https://www.upwork.com/`) to browse through the open jobs.

Aside from money, what you can offer writers is exposure to your audience. If your blog has impressive amounts of traffic, social shares, or comments from readers, share that information with the outside writers you are courting. You will find that the more exposure you have to offer writers, the less you will have to pay for their content. In fact, after your blog reaches a critical mass, you won't need to pay a dime for content — writers will come to you for the exposure.

Keep in mind that the reach the writer brings to the table will affect how much you have to pay him or her. The more influence and followers your guest writer has, the more money and exposure that author will require from you.

Ensuring success with content creators

The best way to ensure success from an outside writer is to supply that writer with guidelines for your blog. These guidelines, like those on the Write for Us page, communicate what types of content perform best on your blog, what audience you gear your articles toward, and other standards for an outside writer's work to meet. For instance, if your blog doesn't accept certain kinds of images (stock or personal photography, for example), or if you require images of a certain size, with a certain resolution, with a specific border, you can indicate those restrictions in your guidelines. Your guidelines help writers shape the content they provide, and they save you a mess of editing, formatting, and image-polishing later. Send writers your guidelines as far in advance as possible. You can send the guidelines in a separate document or paste them directly into your correspondence.

Next, lead with examples by showing writers articles on your own blog that you want their article to model. Also, provide links to content that has done well in the past to help the writers get a sense of what direction to take the article.

After writers know what you expect based on your guidelines and the examples you've provided, ask the writers for information about the post they intend to write for you. Have them give you the following information:

>> **The working title:** The title of a blog post, also called a headline, is a promise to the reader. The working title isn't necessarily the headline that will be published on your blog, but it is a guiding statement for the writer as he produces the post.

>> **The outline:** You want to know how the post will lay out, details for each section, and what images the writer expects to use. The more detail you receive from the writer upfront, the greater the chance for the article's success.

When writers send back the working title and outline, approve or make suggestions and ask questions until you're satisfied that their efforts will generate a post that is publishable on your blog.

Last, discuss timeframes and deadlines. Depending on the type of post, expect the writer to take between one and three weeks to develop the first draft. If you've never worked with someone before, ask her to write the first 25 percent and send it to you or your editor for review. This preview allows you to make adjustments and work with the writer before she completes the post.

Be sure to respect the writers' time as they've respected yours and set expectations on turnaround time. How long will they have to wait until you send back edits or questions? How long before they know their post is approved? When will you communicate their publish date to them? With guidelines, timing, and expectations set, you ensure that your content creating process can go off without a hitch.

Editing the first draft

After a contributor has submitted a first draft (on time, you hope!), you approach the draft for a technical edit. This is the edit you perform to ensure that this piece of content is publishable in its current state, or can be brought up to standard without an overhaul of the content.

First, compare the final post to the headline and outline the writer submitted earlier in the process. Does it deliver on the promise in the working title? Does it stay true to the outline? Point out any areas of concern you have. Pay particular attention to areas that deviate from the stated promise in the working title or that the writer omitted from the expected outline.

Next, run down your guidelines to verify that the post meets your publishing criteria. Is the tone right for your blog? Does it deliver the types of content your audience expects from your blog? Do images meet the standard and specifications set by your guidelines? Does your writer have the necessary permissions secured to use images in the content?

After you established that the post does or does not meet your guidelines, go through the meat of the post to see what edits you need to make. What does the writer need to expand on? What should he remove? What can he clarify for the audience?

Decide whether the post needs to go back to the writer for further revisions and edits, or if you will publish as is or with minor edits from you or your editorial team. If you return the post to the writer, communicate a follow-up deadline in order to reach your publishing date. Your notes should clarify exactly what you're hoping for in the revisions, and what edits need to be made.

Copyediting the post

After you have a publishable post (one that fulfills the promise and meets your standards), you should perform a thorough copy edit. Edit the post to meet your language style (do you capitalize certain words by company standards? Hyphenate words that others don't?), or add clarifying sentences that you believe your audience needs to connect the dots.

Next, go through the post line by line, checking for misspellings and grammar errors, among other things. You should edit for formatting, flow, tone, and to ensure that links, images, and video work as expected. The goal of the copy edit is to ensure that the content is free of errors, including misspellings, grammar errors, and broken links.

Applying Blog Headline Formulas

Everything we discussed in this chapter is a moot point if you don't create blog post titles, also called headlines, that entice and engage your audience. The headline is the most important part of your post because it cuts through the noise to grab your readers' attention and convince them to give you their precious time by reading your article.

But how do you come up with these stellar blog headlines that increase clicks? You follow a formula. There are six different categories that great blog headlines fall into, and we're going to detail each.

Tapping into self-interest

The first headline formula is the self-interest headline. These are your bread-and-butter blog post titles and should be used frequently. Self-interest

headlines are usually direct and speak to a specific benefit that your audience will gain by reading your blog post. These headlines start to answer the "What's in it for me?" question, as well as help prequalify readers by giving them a clue about what the article entails.

Here are some sample self-interest headlines:

Grow Your Website Traffic with the 3-Step Content Marketing Plan

How to Retire in Style Even if You Haven't Started Saving

Top 10 Organic Food Markets in Austin, Texas

Piquing curiosity

If self-interest headlines work because they communicate a direct benefit of reading a blog post, curiosity-based ones succeed for the exact opposite reason. These headlines pique the interest of readers without giving away too much information, which leads to a higher number of clicks. Curiosity headlines create an itch that needs to be scratched, and readers have a hard time resisting reading the blog post. Be careful, though, because curiosity-based headlines can fall flat if you miss the mark. Because curiosity headlines are more ambiguous, you might annoy your reader when the content fails to live up to the expectations. So make sure that your curiosity headline doesn't mislead your reader.

Here are some examples of curiosity headlines:

25 Things You Didn't Know Your iPhone Could Do

Grill the Perfect Beef Filet with the "Butterfly Process"

This is Why You Should Never Drink Raw Milk

TIP

It's rarely a good idea to use pure curiosity in a blog post title. Instead, as with the example preceding headlines, combine curiosity with benefit to craft a powerful blog post headline. For example, you might be interested in reading a blog post about grilling the perfect beef filet, but the added curiosity created by the "Butterfly Process" makes the headline even more compelling.

Employing urgency and scarcity

The most powerful way to get someone to read your blog post is to impart urgency or scarcity with your headline. Headlines that communicate urgency and scarcity tell readers they must act *now,* or they'll miss something. Don't overuse this technique, or you'll likely aggravate your audience. Use urgency and scarcity headlines only when you truly have a deadline, limited quantity, or limited availability.

Here are some urgency and scarcity headlines:

Get Tickets Now! Woody Allen Speaking at Lincoln Center on October 15th

Free Photography Classes: Last Chance for Open Enrollment

New Book Reveals Ancient Weight Loss Secret; Supplies are Limited

Issuing a warning

Often, people will be more motivated to take action to avoid pain than gain a benefit. Well-crafted warning headlines, like the following, incorporate the promise that you can protect yourself from a threat if you take action:

The Big Lie Hiding in Your Apartment Rental Contract

Warning: Don't Buy Another Ounce of Dog Food Until You Read This

Is Your Child's Mattress Harmful to His or Her Health?

Borrowing authority

A fundamental characteristic of humans is that we look to the behavior of others when making decisions. You can leverage this trait in your headlines by mentioning a person's success story, citing familiar and influential names, or highlighting how many people are already using a product or service.

Smart marketers use this "social proof" — the propensity for people to make choices based on the choices other people have made — wherever they can. The more people making that choice and the more influential those people are, the more influential the social proof.

Consider these "social proof" headlines:

Why 1000s of Bostonians Will Gather in Boston Common on December 8th

What Dr. Oz Eats for a Midnight Snack

The New Justin Timberlake Video Everyone is Talking About

Revealing the new

Keeping your audience informed about new developments in your field builds authority and keeps your audience tuned in. Blog posts that center on the cutting edge need a headline that stands out and conveys the newness or urgency of the

latest information. These headlines often work well when combined with a curiosity element and are known as news headlines.

Take, for example, these news headlines:

Ancient Human Cancer Discovered in 1.7 Million-Year-Old Bone

Vibrant New Species Discovered Deep in the Caribbean

New Tool Changes Webinars Forever

Auditing a Blog Post

When you're reading or editing a blog post, putting your finger on the *specific* reasons a post is falling short of fabulous can be difficult. Communicating what needs to be improved to a writer or content team can be even more difficult — that is, these things are difficult if you don't have a process or don't know what to look for. To audit your blog post, you should examine ten elements. The following sections discuss each element to help you learn to evaluate and improve each one.

Presents an exceptional headline

In the section "Applying Blog Headline Formulas," earlier in this chapter, we list the six categories that headlines often fall into. No matter which headline formula, or combination of formulas, you're using, exceptional headlines have three aspects in common.

>> The headline contains a promise of what people will gain from reading the post.

>> Although the headline uses as many words as needed to convey the promise, it's concise and avoids fluff words, which are redundant, unnecessary words or phrases that add little to the headline and slow the reader down, such as *really, just, very,* and *rather.* Here's an example of a headline with fluff words:

Why It Is Very Important to Basically Avoid Fluff Words That Are Rather Empty and Sometimes a Little Distracting in Your Headlines and in Your Writing

Here's a better, more compelling headline:

How Fluff Words Are Driving Your Readers Away and How You Can Avoid Them in Your Writing

>> The headline is compelling without being misleading or full of hype.

Headlines that don't work well are often merely statements or incomplete phrases. For example, consider three blog headlines found on a fitness and nutrition website:

Chocolate for Breakfast

Benefits of Meditation

Win the War Against Childhood Obesity

Notice how all three headlines are simply statements of (presumably) fact. They can be dramatically improved, and often by a simple alteration such as

Chocolate for Breakfast?

7 Benefits of Meditation

How to Win the War Against Childhood Obesity

Although these modified headlines aren't perfect, they're considerably more effective than their originals. Adding a question mark to the first headline is a better way to pique a reader's interest. Putting a number in the middle headline eliminates vagueness and adds specificity. Finally, the addition of "How to" in the last headline turns a statement into a promise.

If you're struggling to come up with a headline for your piece, you can often find one hiding in the opening or closing of the article. Look for the promise statement that conveys the benefit of the article in your introduction or conclusion. You'll likely find the beginnings of a headline there.

Includes a strong introduction

The weakest part of an article is often the introduction. Sometimes a blog post can go from being good to great if you just chop off the first five paragraphs to get the reader to the point quicker. Exceptional introductions contain the following elements:

>> Intro copy is extremely easy to consume and develops a rhythm for the post.

>> Intro copy draws readers in and compels them to read the entire article.

When writing your introduction, here's a trick you can use: Open the post with a punchy, curiosity-building sentence. Keep it short (rarely longer than eight words). The first sentence is intended to create a "greased chute" (a term coined by copywriter Joe Sugarman) that starts the reader "sliding" down the page.

Here are a few examples of this type of opening line:

> You've finally found it.
>
> Here's the big misconception . . .
>
> Stop me if you've heard this before.

After you get readers started down the "chute," keeping them moving is much easier; getting them started is the difficult part.

Offers easy-to-consume content

One of the goals of a blogger is for people to read the entire article, from start to finish, and not bounce to somewhere in between. Blog content isn't doing its job if it isn't easy to consume. To ensure that your content is easy to read, be sure that

» Copy is formatted in a way that makes the article easy to consume.

» Transitions between ideas and subheadlines are smooth.

Blog articles aren't like books. An exceptional blog should not consist of dense, long paragraphs with few to no images or video. Long, uninterrupted blocks of text are intimidating to a reader, not to mention visually unappealing. Help move the reader through the content by breaking up text with the following:

» Bulleted lists

» Numbered lists

» Block quotes

» Subheadings

» Artwork and images (such as pictures, GIFs, infographics, and embedded videos)

» Bold font

» Italics

Next, look for changes between ideas and other areas where readers might slow down or stop reading. At the points that may block readers, make sure to include transitions. Transitions help to tie the article together, enhance reader comprehension, and help keep readers engaged and moving down the page to the final sentence. Figure 5-4 shows an excerpt of a blog post that uses figures, headings, bulleted lists, a bold font, and short paragraphs to break up text and make the content easy to read.

FIGURE 5-4:
A blog post uses formatting in a way that makes the content easy to consume.

Source: *https://buffer.com/library/words-and-phrases-that-convert-ultimate-list*

A final point: Break up paragraphs. Long paragraphs in blog posts are like speed bumps, slowing readers down and deterring them from fully consuming the article. When you're laying out your blog post, break up paragraphs that are longer than three lines to improve consumption.

Satisfies your goal

Although a blog has many goals, such as branding, providing your audience value, and establishing yourself as an authority, the main goal of a blog is to generate quality leads that ultimately lead to sales. The keys to higher conversion rates from blog content are as follows:

» **Relevance:** The offer you make in the post needs to relate to that article's topic. The more congruent the offer, the more likely you'll secure a conversion.

» **Consumption:** If the copy is difficult to get through, readers will leave your page in frustration.

To help meet the goal, be sure to include the following in each article that you publish:

» A clear call to action (CTA) that is relevant to the subject matter of the article.

» Effective copy and design for the call to action so that it compels readers to take the desired action.

» A call to action that is located in one or more prominent positions within the post, giving it a better chance of being seen.

Figure 5-5 shows a call to action from DigitalMarketer blog, catching visitors' attention before visitors leave the site. This CTA has a simple message and design that helps to grab attention and generate clicks.
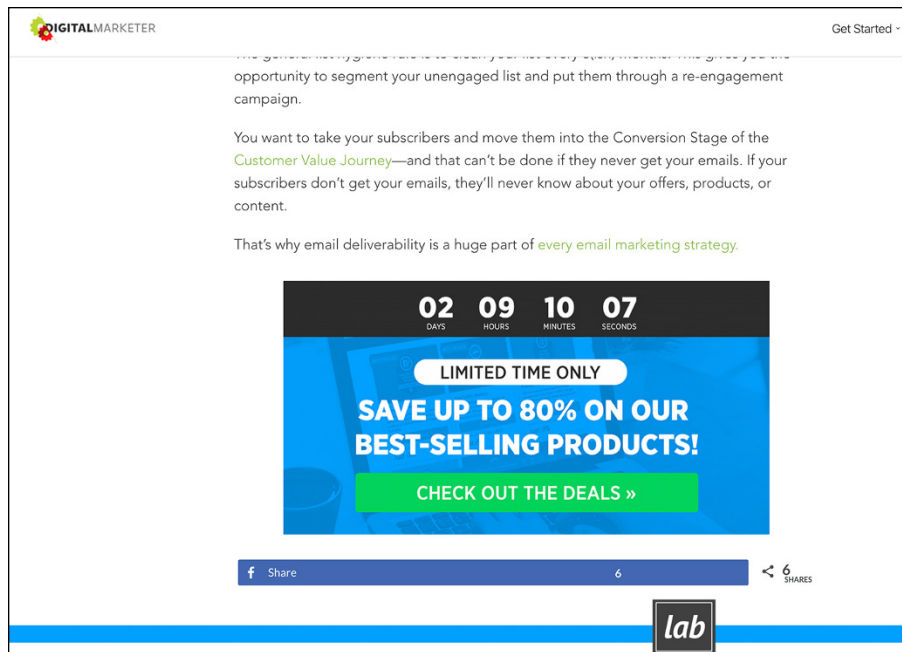
FIGURE 5-5: A DigitalMarketer blog post with a scarcity countdown CTA.

Source: https://www.digitalmarketer.com/blog/what-is-email-deliverability/

Includes quality media

The images, videos, and audio files that you include in an article make up the media of your post. Quality media that loads quickly is extremely important to the success of an article. Media that takes longer than three seconds to load, or is of

poor quality, causes readers to become frustrated and seek out blog content that doesn't make them wait or that looks fuzzy. Committing to the production of high-quality media is one way to stand out in an industry saturated with content. Therefore, be sure to include high-quality images, videos, and audio that are clean and crisp. Also, look for instances where media can further explain or enrich a point made in an article.

Hiring a full-time photographer or graphic designer may not be necessary, but try to avoid using stock images and video. Often, stock forms of media look too staged or forced, plus they don't always match well with the topic of your piece.

Provides a compelling close

Your article's closing paragraph can take your post from good to great. Effective conclusions tie the piece together. Therefore, by the close, any curiosity loops that your heading may have opened need to be answered, and you must have delivered on the promise of the article; otherwise, readers feel cheated and might form a negative impression of your brand. You can finish a post by using humor, wit, or insight, or otherwise incite emotions that compel readers to comment, share, or visit more pages on your blog.

REMEMBER

The conclusion is the make-or-break portion of your article that makes readers decide to share the post, comment, click your call to action, or dive deeper into your site. Your closing doesn't have to be epic, but be sure that the article doesn't end abruptly. The simplest way to close a piece is to restate the intro and ask the reader to comment and share.

Uses search engine optimization

Done right, effective search engine optimization (SEO) helps your blog posts rank higher in search engines, such as Google, which will improve your chances of having your blog posts found by your audience. (We go into greater detail about SEO tactics in Chapter 8.) To optimize your blog post, choose a relevant keyword or keyword phrase that is unique to your post and include that keyword in the

» Title tag

» Body text

» Image alt attribute

» Universal resource locator (URL)

» Meta description

Another important way to optimize your blog is to cross-link related and relevant sites to your blog article. You can link to other sites that aren't associated with your brand but are relevant to the topic of the article. You can also cross-link to other blog posts you've written that elaborate on or enrich a point that you make in your latest post.

Categorizes your topics

As your blog expands, you may find yourself covering a larger base of topics. This is where categorizing and organizing your blogs posts comes into play. For instance, an economics blog may cover a wide variety of topics, such as tax tips, financial planning, budget and saving, and others. To help readers find what they are looking for, include categories, also called tags, on each post you publish.

Including categories helps to improve user experience, which in turn increases the value that you bring to your audience. Although it's often as simple as selecting a box by using your mouse, selecting the right category for your blog posts is an important checkpoint of any blog post audit.

Completely delivers on the promise

If the goal of the headline and introduction is to make a compelling promise, the job of the body of the blog post is to ensure that the article delivers completely on that promise. If the post doesn't fulfill the promise made, amend your headline or get back to work on the blog post. Nothing destroys the reputation of your blog quicker than writing a great headline and failing to deliver in the article.

That said, this element of the audit is about more than simply delivering on the promise. You're also making sure that every idea presented in the post is appropriately "fleshed out" and doesn't leave your audience confused or needing more information to understand the point. Look for areas in the post that you can strengthen by adding

>> Media (images, video, audio)

>> Examples

>> Data

>> Internal or external links to more information

Go the extra mile with each and every article, and you'll see results. Consider producing fewer posts that are exceptionally complete, as opposed to a high volume of content that leaves the audience wanting.

Keeps professional consistency

What's the voice or personality of your brand? Is it professional? Snarky? Academic? Whatever it may be, produce content that reinforces your brand. For instance, a law firm blog probably shouldn't use curse words in its articles. But an edgy motorcycle blog has a better chance of getting away with using certain four-letter words because doing so might be more consistent with its brand. Therefore, whatever the topic of your article, be sure that it remains in line with your brand's personality.

Also, and perhaps more important for some organizations, ensure that the newest blog post doesn't contradict something else that you've published on the blog or anywhere else. For example, if you have a fashion blog with a post last year about the sins of wearing undershirts, but your newest blog post centers on the importance of undershirts and doesn't address what has changed since your past article on the topic, you're going to confuse and lose readers because of your inconsistency.